
**Natural Resources, Ecology &
Parks Committee**

SSB 5610

Brief Description: Promoting salmon recovery on a regionwide basis.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation (originally sponsored by Senator Jacobsen).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Extends the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office (GSRO) from June 30, 2006, until June 30, 2015.
- Defines regional salmon recovery organizations and regions, authorizes regional recovery organizations to be a lead entity and authorizes the Governor or the GSRO to designate salmon recovery regions.
- Establishes a forum on monitoring salmon recovery and watershed health co-chaired by the Director of the GSRO and the Director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife to coordinate technical and policy issues relating to monitoring.

Hearing Date: 3/22/05

Staff: Jeff Olsen (786-7157).

Background:

Salmon Recovery Planning (ESHB 2496, Chapter 246, Laws of 1998)

The Salmon Recovery Act of 1998 established several new provisions including the creation of the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office, the requirement for a biennial State of the Salmon Report, an Independent Science Panel, the creation of local salmon recovery groups or "lead entities," and an Interagency Review Team to disperse funds for habitat restoration projects. Currently, there are 27 lead entities organizations in Washington.

The Salmon Recovery Act established technical advisory groups at the Conservation Commission to identify the limiting factors for salmon.

Salmon Recovery Funding (2ESSB 5595, Chapter 13, Laws of 1999, 1st Spec. Sess.)

The Salmon Recovery Funding Act of 1999 primarily established the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) within the Interagency Office for Outdoor Recreation (IAC), but also included

several other salmon recovery provisions. The SRFB makes grants for salmon habitat projects and salmon recovery activities pursuant to legislative appropriation. The IAC provides grant and loan administration assistance to the SRFB. The SRFB must develop procedures and criteria for allocating funds on a statewide basis to address the highest priorities for salmon habitat protection and restoration.

Regional Salmon Recovery Organizations

Five regional organizations have formed to address salmon recovery on an Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU) scale. Two regional recovery organizations have been created statutorily, the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board, and the Snake River Salmon Recovery Board. The other three regional entities include the Puget Sound Shared Strategy, the Yakima Sub-basin Fish and Wildlife Planning Board, and the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board. Regional recovery groups are in the process of completing regional salmon recovery plans. When completed, the plans will contain strategies to address habitat, harvest, hatchery, and hydropower activities for recovering salmon populations within the region.

Watershed Health and Monitoring (SSB 5637, Chapter 298, Laws of 2001)

The Watershed Health Monitoring and Assessment Act of 2001 established a Monitoring Oversight Committee (MOC) to review the progress of watershed-related monitoring and make recommendations. The MOC consisted of natural resource agencies with the Director of the GSRO and the Chair of the SRFB serving as the co-chairs. Several areas were specified for the MOC to address when developing the monitoring strategy and action plan including the standardization of monitoring protocols for salmon recovery and watershed health, integration of monitoring information into decision-making, recommending stable sources of funding, as well as other factors. In addition, the MOC is required to recommend organizational and governance structures for oversight and implementation of the coordinated monitoring framework, and identify administrative actions that will be undertaken by state agencies to implement elements of the coordinated monitoring program.

Summary of Bill:

Legislative intent is established to develop and implement salmon recovery activities through strong watershed-based local and regional recovery plans. Regional salmon recovery organizations are defined as entities formed for the purpose of recovering salmon that are either created statutorily or recognized by the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office (GSRO). Salmon recovery regions are defined as geographic areas identified in the Statewide Salmon Recovery Strategy that encompass watersheds with common stocks of salmon that are generally consistent with the areas identified by the federal fish services. The Governor, with the assistance of the GSRO, may designate additional salmon recovery regions for the purpose of planning, coordinating, and monitoring the implementation of regional recovery plans. Organizations seeking recognition must demonstrate support from lead entities within the region, and must invite the participation of local governments, tribes, and other stakeholders.

The GSRO is extended from June 30, 2006, until June 30, 2015. The duties of GSRO are expanded to include assisting regional recovery organizations in submitting plans to the federal fish services for adoption as federal recovery plans. In addition, the GSRO may assist state agencies and others in obtaining federal assurances under the Endangered Species Act.

A forum on monitoring salmon recovery and watershed health (monitoring forum) is established, co-chaired by the director of the GSRO and the director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife, to coordinate technical and policy issues relating to monitoring. The monitoring forum must develop a set of measures to convey progress on salmon recovery and watershed health that can be easily understood by the public. The monitoring forum must include representatives from the following 9 state agencies:

1. Department of Ecology;
2. Salmon Recovery Funding Board;
3. Salmon Recovery Office;
4. Department of Fish and Wildlife;
5. Department of Natural Resources;
6. Puget Sound Action Team;
7. Conservation Commission;
8. Department of Agriculture; and
9. Department of Transportation.

The monitoring forum shall invite participation from federal, tribal, and other stakeholders and work toward standardizing measures. The monitoring forum must report periodically to the Governor and the appropriate legislative committees regarding activities and recommendations. In addition, the monitoring forum shall review pilot monitoring programs that integrate data collection, management and access, and habitat project and management information.

The Governor's salmon report is continued through December 1, 2012, and additional considerations are added including recommendations for funding for recovery activities. The report must also summarize monitoring data coordinated by the forum on monitoring salmon recovery and watershed health established in the act.

The Monitoring Oversight Committee established in 2001, technical advisory groups created under the Conservation Commission to conduct limiting factors analysis, and requirements for the Independent Science Panel to provide recommendations on monitoring are repealed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on 3/18/05.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.